

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: Social Media Documents in Institutions of Higher Education: A Content Analysis

STUDENT: Stephen Jendraszak

DEGREE: Master of Arts in Public Relations

COLLEGE: Communication, Information, and Media

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Through content analysis of the 26 social media documents belonging to English-speaking higher education institutions cataloged by Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) as of January 22, 2011, this study seeks to understand the types of documents institutions of higher education employ to set expectations and boundaries regarding behavior in social media for their employees and other constituents and to educate members of their campus communities about the attendant opportunities and dangers; which governance bodies, offices, or departments are involved in drafting and enforcing such documents; and which potential issues are addressed.

The findings reveal significant variation among the documents analyzed in terms of titling, authority, administration, enforceability, and issues addressed. This lack of consensus may indicate that professionals and faculty at institutions of higher education are not yet sharing with one another their thinking on these issues or the concerns that have arisen in their experiences. There are indications that the thinking of many document authors remains at the tactical, rather than strategic, level.